

Meeting Minutes

Sierra Front-Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

September 27-28, 2012

Winnemucca, Nevada

I. RAC Attendance and Welcome

8:00 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 27, 2012 – The meeting was called to order by Chairman Will Peterson with the following members of the RAC present:

SIERRA FRONT–NORTHWESTERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEMBER	RESOURCE/EXPERTISE	09/27/2012
<i>Will Roger Peterson (Chair)</i>	Recreation	X
<i>Craig Young (Vice Chair)</i>	Archaeology	X
<i>Tim Dufurrena</i>	Livestock Permittee	X
<i>Verl Ray Hendrix</i>	Livestock Permittee	X
<i>Kyle Snyder</i>	Energy/Minerals	
<i>Deborah Lassiter</i>	Energy/Minerals	X
<i>Mathew Gingerich</i>	Transportation/ROWs	X
<i>David Von Seggern</i>	Environmental	X
<i>William Molini</i>	Wildlife	X
<i>Mark Freese</i>	State Agency	X
<i>Charles Matton</i>	Wild Horses & Burros	X
<i>Jim Billingsley</i>	Elected Official	X
<i>Michael P. Drews</i>	Public-At-Large	X
<i>Douglas Hogan</i>	Academic	X
<i>Wayne Burke</i>	Native Americans	

BLM Staff Present: Gene Seidlitz, Chris McAlear, Vern Graham, Donovan Walker, Mark Hall, Gerald Dixon, Chris Rose, Jason Spence, Garrett Noles, Brett Allan, Lisa Ross, (12)

Public Present: N/A

II. Summary of Motions Other Than to Approve Minutes

Willie Molini made the motion to approve the letter drafted by the NCA RAC subgroup referring to the Jackson Wild Horse Gather, recommending that when BLM conducts horse gathers they remove enough horses to be at low AML and not above high AML. The letter will be addressed to District Manager Gene Seidlitz with a copy to State Director Amy Lueders. Debbie Lassiter seconded the motion. The motion passed.

III. Welcome & Introductions

Will Peterson welcomed all and called the meeting to order. Introductions were made.

IV. Approval of Minutes from the June meeting in Carson City

David Von-Seggern made the motion to approve the minutes. Tim Duferrena seconded the motion and the motion was passed.

V. RAC Subcommittee Reports

➤ **NCA RAC Subgroup** – Will Peterson

Two letters were presented to the RAC for approval.

#1 - Letter concerning the Jackson Wild Horse Gather and the number of horses removed leaving a population above high AML– **See motion above**

#2 -This letter concerns the new ownership of Soldier Meadows Ranch and the grazing permit renewal. There was discussion about what the RAC's and sub-group's role is, if any in monitoring and managing private land and BLM grazing permits. A rewrite of the letter was agreed upon and Willie Molini, David Von-Seggern, Tim Duferrena, and Debbie Lassiter will be leading this effort.

➤ **Wild Horse and Burro Subgroup** – Chuck Matton

The northeastern part of NV and the NE RAC has discussed bait and trap. There was discussion on why weren't more horses bait and trapped? Gene Seidlitz was asked by Mr. Matton about water/bait trap on the Jackson Mountain gather and Gene provided the rationale as to why it did not occur but did explain the initial efforts were in place for this type of gather.

➤ **Sage-grouse** – Willie Molini

Willi is going to meet with the NSO to find out about a budget. He attended the meeting regarding sage-grouse habitat at the NSO. Recommendations are being gathered from all sides. The recommendations will be submitted to the other NV RAC's. Peter Coats from the USGS may be invited to the next RAC meeting to discuss sage-grouse.

➤ **Grazing** – Nothing to report

Gene is seeking council to assist/advice with grazing permits and the renewal process for BLM NV. Gene will follow up with the BLM State Director and Raul Morales regarding what was discussed and agreed to at the January 2012 Tri-RAC Meeting. Mark Freese and Gene concurred that this topic was discussed and all three RAC's had significant interests in further reviewing, researching this topic and nothing has occurred by NSO to date.

The SFNWGB RAC Subgroup Grazing Committee members that are interested in this are: are Mike Drews, Tim Dufurrena, Debbie Lassiter, Mark Freese, and Doug Hogan.

VI. District Manager Reports

Carson City – Chris McAlear – See DM Report

Additional discussion regarding WH/B included: There is limited space available for gathered horses. Currently, there is room for 4800 horses.

Winnemucca – Gene Seidlitz – See DM Report

XIII. Drought - Jason Spence, WDO (see power point)

Jason explained drought is not simply a lack of rainfall or snow accumulation, but can be related to deficiencies in soil moisture and groundwater, lack of surface water in streams, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. Drought is the degree of dryness in comparison to a "normal" or an average and the duration of a dry period and must be region specific because of precipitation variability. There are five drought intensity categories: Abnormally Dry, Moderate, Severe, Extreme, and Exceptional. Most of northwestern Nevada is Extreme. Drought detection/monitoring in field observations include vegetation conditions, woodland health, water availability/distribution, soil conditions, wildlife, wild horses and/or burros. There are three stages of the State of Nevada Drought Response Plan which include: the Watch Stage, Alert Stage, and Emergency Stage. At the Emergency Stage, the drought Response Committee will make a recommendation to the Governor for emergency status. The Drought Response

Committee consists of the Office of the State Climatologist, Division of Water Resources, and the Division of Emergency Management. The committee reports to the Governor whenever there is a change in the drought stage.

Four BLM Districts within NV serve as Drought Task Forces to act as experts in the drought affected regions. The Winnemucca District's drought related actions include: issuance of 2-3 drought letters to livestock permittee's and stakeholder's; meetings with permittee's one on one and in Denio, Orovada Winnemucca, Lovelock and Gerlach, identified areas of concern for ongoing/drought compliance monitoring 2012 based on ; critical fish/wildlife habitats including LCT, sage-grouse; riparian; past forage/water issues; wild horse and/or burros; areas brought forward by interested parties; emergency wild horse gather and water hauling; ; permittees adjusting grazing operations; compliance inspections for fall/winter turnout and year-round grazing;

XIV. Public Comment Period – No public present

XVIII. Grazing Permitting Process - Jason Spence, WDO (see PowerPoint)

The Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health were approved and published in 1997 for all three NV RACs. In 2001, the BLM WO issued a handbook entitled Rangeland Health Standards. The handbook describes the authorities, objectives, and policies that guide the Healthy Rangeland Initiative, and the process for conducting assessments and evaluations of rangeland health. In 2003, the BLM issued policy directing the BLM offices to have all grazing permits and leases fully processed by the end of fiscal year 2009. "Fully Processed" is defined by BLM as NEPA being fully completed and the completion of appropriate consultation in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. In 2009, BLM issued a memorandum which directed BLM to prioritize permit renewals and focus of the priority permits first. Definitions (see handout).

Monitoring was discussed and explained as the periodic observation and collection of information to evaluate the effects of management actions in meeting the standards for rangeland health. There are four stages in the evaluation process: There was discussion on rather the process could be changed. It was recommended to re-convene with the Tri-RAC and come up with a recommendation. Gene and Chris will meet with NSO staff to let them know of the concerns from the RAC.

XIX. Ruby Pipeline - Mark Hall, WD (see PowerPoint)

The pipeline is 678 miles running from Opal, WY to Malin, OR, with 368 miles on federal land. The construction began in July 2010 and was completed in July 2011. Operation began the end of July 2011. As part of the Plan of Development, the restoration and re-vegetation plans have been detailed within. Seed mixes were determined based on the soil and vegetation types that were studied during surveys for the right-of-way (ROW). The Winnemucca District, resource specialists identified 12 distinct seed mixes for the ROW. Seeding was done by broadcasting and drill seeding. Sage brush seedlings were planted in six areas within the Winnemucca District which were identified as critical habitat for sage-grouse and pygmy rabbit. The majority of these areas are within the Black Rock Field Office. There is a minimum of five years of monitoring to see if goals are met. FERC and BLM will make the determination for BLM lands. There are 41 unique monitoring plots within the Winnemucca District. All monitoring plots will have 25% or less of invasive and noxious weeds. Riparian areas will be monitored in a similar fashion as seeded areas. There are qualitative measures to account for grazing, OHV and wild horse and burro use of the re-vegetated ROW.

XX. 2012 Season Fire Update - Donovan Walker, Derek Messmer, WD (see PowerPoint)

To date, there have been 36 lightning fires (287,867 acres) and 55 human caused fires (16,920 acres) within the Winnemucca District. The largest fire was the Holloway (lightning caused) for a total of 461,088 acres (215,541 in Nevada). The WD hosted three hotshot crews and one crew from Alaska. Resources included 11 engines, 1 interagency engine, 1 dozer, 2 water tenders, and 3 battalion chiefs. Several aerial resources were staffed throughout the year. As of Sept. 13th, over 484,000 gallons of retardant has been delivered to NV and surrounding area fires. On August 5, there were 13 fire starts throughout the central and northern portions of the Winnemucca District. The largest fire of this event was the Holloway fire.

XXI. Permittee Meeting Outreach – Field Trip Overview – Gene Seidlitz, WDO

Gene explained the logistics of the following day's field trip.

XXII. Adjournment

The Tri-RAC meeting will be held in Reno the last week in January. The exact date is to come.

9/28/12 Field Trip

Time

8 a.m.

Topic

Meet at the Winnemucca District Office

Traveled to 2012 Wildland Fires and Ruby Pipeline –

1. 2011 China Garden Fire Rehab
2. Ruby Pipeline
3. Montana Mountains
4. Looked at Bilk Creek Mountains but did not have time to visit